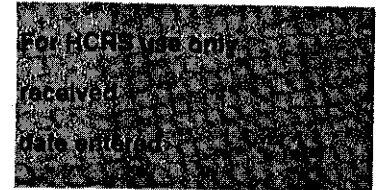


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



1. Name

historic Randolph School

(VHLC File No. 127-388)

and/or common (same)

2. Location

street & number 300 S. Randolph Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Richmond

N/A vicinity of

congressional district

N/A

state Virginia

code 51

county (in city)

code 760

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<u> </u> district	<u> </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<u> </u> occupied	<u> </u> agriculture	<u> </u> museum
<u> </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<u> </u> private	<u> </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<u> </u> commercial	<u> </u> park
<u> </u> structure	<u> </u> both	<u> </u> work in progress	<u> </u> educational	<u> </u> private residence
<u> </u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u> </u> entertainment	<u> </u> religious
<u> </u> object	<u> </u> in process	<u> </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<u> </u> government	<u> </u> scientific
	<u> </u> being considered	<u> </u> yes: unrestricted	<u> </u> industrial	<u> </u> transportation
	<u>N/A</u>	<u> </u> no	<u> </u> military	<u> </u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: not in use

4. Owner of Property

name Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority

street & number 901 Chamberlayne Parkway

city, town Richmond

N/A vicinity of

state Virginia

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Richmond City Hall

street & number 900 East Broad Street

city, town Richmond

state Virginia

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None to Date

has this property been determined eligible? yes ☒ no

date N/A

 federal state county local

depository for survey records N/A

city, town N/A

state

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved

date N/A

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

Randolph School is a highly visible architectural landmark in the Randolph (historically known as Sydney) area of Richmond. The old school building is a 2-story unpainted brick structure with a raised roof. Italianate in style, its character is derived from the 4-story mansard tower at the original entrance, the use of hooded windows, and its generally attenuated proportions. The present building was completed in 4 different phases. The oldest section, fronting on Randolph Street, was built in 1896 and added to in 1900, with minimal change in style, details or roofline. In 1934 another classroom addition was made, slightly smaller in size and simpler in detail. The third and final addition, completed in 1952, contains a cafeteria and a combined gymnasium/auditorium as well as services. This last addition is now used as a neighborhood community center, and as it is still owned by the City (different ownership from other parts of building) it is not part of the nomination.

7. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The original Randolph School building fronts on 300 S. Randolph Street. This 1896-1900 section has a 5 bay front and 10 bay side elevations, and features a 4-story mansard tower centered in the Randolph Street or east elevation. Originally the main entrance (east elevation) this tower is flanked on either side by 2 window bays. Both the north and south elevations of this original portion are identical. In a symmetrical arrangement both side elevations have alternating groups of single and double window bays in a 2-6-2 relationship. The most westerly 8 bays of both 10-bay elevations project outward from the front or easterly part of the building. The rear or west elevation repeats the bay pattern of the front or east elevation, except for the tower. This elevation has been modified by the addition of a three story structure at the center of this elevation which connects the original section to the 1934 addition.

The exterior of the 1896-1900 portion of the building is characterized by the verticality and attenuated proportions of the bays, accentuated by the entry tower. Also, the differentiation of the fenestration is one of the principal character defining features of the building. The basement level casement windows are wood, 4-light, rectangular openings with granite sills and lintels. The 2nd and 3rd floor windows are 4/4 double-hung arched wood windows capped by terra cotta hoods and granite sills. The 2nd floor windows have flat arches except where altered on the north elevation, and the 3rd floor windows have semi-circular arches. The rough cut granite is continued as a water table. An ornamental terra cotta string course wraps the building between the 2nd and 3rd levels. The bases and doric capitals of the pilasters are also terra cotta. A simple wooden cornice surmounts a corbelled brick frieze.

(see Continuation Sheet #1

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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RANDOLPH SCHOOL, RICHMOND, VA. (City)

Continuation sheet #1

Item number 7

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7. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The floor plan of the 1896-1900 section of the building is that of a single, double-loaded central corridor on each floor. The original floor plan has been altered somewhat over the years with the change in programmatic requirements, although the essential layout has remained constant. For example, the corridor was widened to incorporate two stairways, since enclosed by fire-walls and doors. Presently the spaces of either side of the corridor are divided into classrooms, toilets, mechanical, administrative and other spaces. The wooden trim is plain, serving as window and door surrounds. The walls all have tongue and groove wainscot with a chair rail. The panelled doors have single light transoms and panelled surrounds. Several of the spaces retain their original pressed tin ceilings. Original finishes remain, although they are sometimes interrupted by later alterations. The windows appear to be in operable condition; none have been removed or altered except at the additions discussed above.

The 1934 addition to the building was designed with much simpler, though compatible ornament to the original. A small, almost square addition of the same height as the original, this section is detached from the earlier structure except for a connection at the corridors (discussed later). This connecting elevation (east elevation) has no exterior fenestration. The "west elevation" is a common wall connecting this section to the 1952 addition, which is not part of this nomination. Both the north and south elevations are identical except for slight variations at the basement level, with 6 bays of double windows.

This addition's simple ornament is limited to a smooth granite watertable, a cornice, simple doric capitals to the pilasters, and geometric caps to the brick piers separating the windows. This section of the building has a rusticated, raised basement and brick quoins. The windows are wooden 12/12, double-hung. The head of the windows is a soldier course. The sills are all granite. The roof is built-up with a plain parapet.

As a part of the 1934 addition a hyphen was introduced to connect the 2 sections, and to provide a secondary entrance on the north (Grayland Avenue) elevation. The hyphen is devoid of architectural ornament except for a fan light over the door (scheduled to be converted into a window opening).

On the interior the 1932 addition continues the use of the double loaded corridor with classrooms on either side. The trim in this section is minimal. A sandy colored glazed brick wainscot runs the length of the corridor which receives natural light from clere-

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

RANDOLPH SCHOOL, RICHMOND, VA. (City)

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story windows opening into the classrooms. A stair at the end (west end) of the corridor formerly connected this section of the building to the 1952 addition but a concrete masonry unit wall has been constructed between the two sections within the last year. Original finishes remain, although they are sometimes interrupted by later alterations and the windows appear to be in operable condition.

The majority of the site has been surfaced with asphalt. At the west end of the site a playground and community swimming pool have been installed. The City of Richmond is planning the construction of a linear park along the north (Grayland Avenue) elevation of the old Randolph School, a feature which should enhance the building. The 200 block of South Randolph has been rejuvenated by the recent rehabilitation of the small group of houses (built ca. 1900) facing Randolph Street. The neighborhood itself was recently the subject of an award winning study which outlined an approach to rebuilding the area; an approach now being implemented by the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	

Specific dates 1896, 1900, 1934 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Randolph School has a twofold significance. Within Richmond's educational history, it embodied the increasing social consciousness of the City during the late 19th century towards public education. Located in the area formerly called Sydney and now Randolph, the school represents the expansion of the City's system in response to growing educational demands and demographic changes. One of four remaining schools in Richmond built before 1900, it is architecturally the best surviving example of a school constructed in the Italianate style. With its four story entrance tower, ornamental terra cotta string course, window hoods and fine brickwork, the building is an excellent example of a turn-of-the-century urban school.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Richmond's first public school, the Lancaster School, was built in 1816 at U and 15th Streets. The school was underfunded (supported only by contributions), undermaintained and was located on an unpaved, mud street. At the time, public education was not a popular concept. Several factors continued to impede the development of the public (or "free") school system in the state of Virginia even after it was later mandated by State law. There was an abhorrence of taxation, which limited city and state funding of the schools. Free schools were associated with charity schools and orphanages.

It was not until after the Civil War, in July 1869 that the State adopted a constitutional amendment mandating the first statewide system of public schools. Due to enormous pressure from the Freedmen's Bureau schools were established for blacks. Although integration was proposed for the free schools white Richmonders balked at the concept and a segregated system was established. By 1871 Richmond had 13 public schools and 3,000 pupils. Although the system was plagued by debt and lack of support from most wealthy whites, Richmond's public schools

(see Continuation Sheet #3)

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RANDOLPH SCHOOL, RICHMOND, VA. (City)

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

grew in popularity, particularly in the 1880's when enrollments increased 78%. Hundreds of white children and a thousand black children were denied admission due to the lack of facilities. The devotion of determined educators kept the schools open when teachers agreed to work without pay in the winter of 1897.

The Randolph School, named like the street it was sited on for a prominent Richmond family, was commissioned in 1894. William Fox, the Superintendent of City Schools wrote in his 1895 annual report "Many of our schoolrooms are too much crowded, and the number of unaccommodated pupils does not diminish. It is hoped that the building in process of erection on Randolph and Chaffin Streets will afford some relief, yet it cannot afford all that is needed in that section of the city." When Randolph opened to its first students on September 15, 1896 it was filled to capacity with 416 white pupils, 8 teachers, and a principal. Tuition when parents could pay was \$8.17 a year. The principal was paid \$150.00 a year and teachers \$50.00 a year.

Randolph School is one of a handful of public school buildings constructed in Richmond prior to 1900 and still standing today. With its four-story mansarded tower, extensive brick corbelling, and ornate terra cotta decorating it is an excellent example of the late Italianate/Second Empire style in a school building. The structure is in relatively good condition and is one of only two buildings built in Richmond of this style still surviving, the other being Fairmount School.

The neighborhood Randolph School was built to serve was Sydney, an early western suburb of the city. Bordered on 2 sides by city landmarks - on the south side by Hollywood Cemetery, and on the west side by Byrd Park, the neighborhood provided housing for the ironworkers of the Tredegar Ironworks and stonecutters. While designed originally as a white elementary school with 8 rooms, Randolph was expanded within the first few years of its construction. An influx of black families to the area resulted in the school's designation as a "colored school" in 1930. An addition in 1934 allowed the school's expansion to include junior high classrooms and facilities. In 1952 a gymnasium and cafeteria were added to the building. In 1970-1974 Randolph was designated as a Special Education facility. The school was closed in June 1974 and has been partially used as a community center since that time.

Recently the building was used to hold community meetings for the discussion of Randolph's revitalization. The Randolph neighborhood has benefitted greatly from recent urban renewal and conservation activities. Neighborhood pride has been revived. The

(see Continuation Sheet #4)

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National Park Service

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RANDOLPH SCHOOL, RICHMOND, VA. (City)

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE - HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

successful collaboration of the City and the neighborhood is in many respects a model for what can be achieved when public and private sectors have a mutual goal. As a result of this successful collaboration the City has spent in excess of \$7.5 million in capital improvements to the neighborhood.

The Randolph School Building, if preserved, will serve as an anchoring landmark in an area going through a period of change and revitalization.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Archives, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

Chisson, Michael B. Richmond After the War, 1865-1890. Richmond, Virginia State Library, 1981.

Meagher, Margaret. Education in Richmond. Richmond: 1939.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA -- Verbal Boundary Description & Boundary Description

distance of 120.3 feet to a railroad spike located at the intersection of the western line of Randolph St. with the northern line of a 16-foot public alley; thence along the northern line of such 16-foot public alley in a westerly direction N 65°56'07" W a distance of 251.75 feet to a lead plug; thence in a northerly direction N 22°53'00" E through a party wall a distance of 120.03 feet to a lead plug located at the point of intersection of such line with the southern line of Grayland Ave.; thence in a easterly direction along the southern line of Grayland Ave. S 65°56'07" E a distance of 251.62 feet to the point of beginning, all as shown on a certain plat of survey prepared by Austin Brockenbrough and Associates, Consulting Engineers, dated April 21, 1983 and entitled "Disposal Plat, Parcel I, Block W-519, Randolph Urban Renewal Program, Project No. VA.R-58, Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority, Richmond, Virginia," a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof.

Boundary Justification: The bounds have been drawn to include the nominated structures and to exclude a noncontributing gymnasium.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Annual Reports of the Superintendent of the Public Schools. Richmond, Virginia
Archives, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia

(see Continuation Sheet #4)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .68 acres

Quadrangle name Richmond, VA

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A

1	1	8
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2	8	2	6	1	0
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4	1	5	1	7	8	3	0
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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

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Verbal boundary description and justification Beginning at a stone located at the intersection of the southern line of Grayland Ave. with the western line of Randolph St.; thence along the western line of Randolph St. in a southerly direction S 23°49' 20" W a
(See Continuation Sheet #4)

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title L.S. Shifflett, AIA

organization SWA Architects, Inc.

date 7/1/84

street & number 1705 East Main Street

telephone (804) 782-9444

city or town Richmond

state Virginia

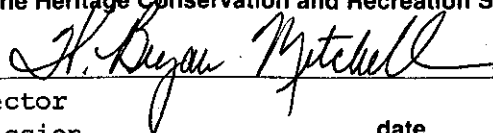
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☒ state ☐ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature



title H. Bryan Mitchell, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

date August 21, 1984

For HCPRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

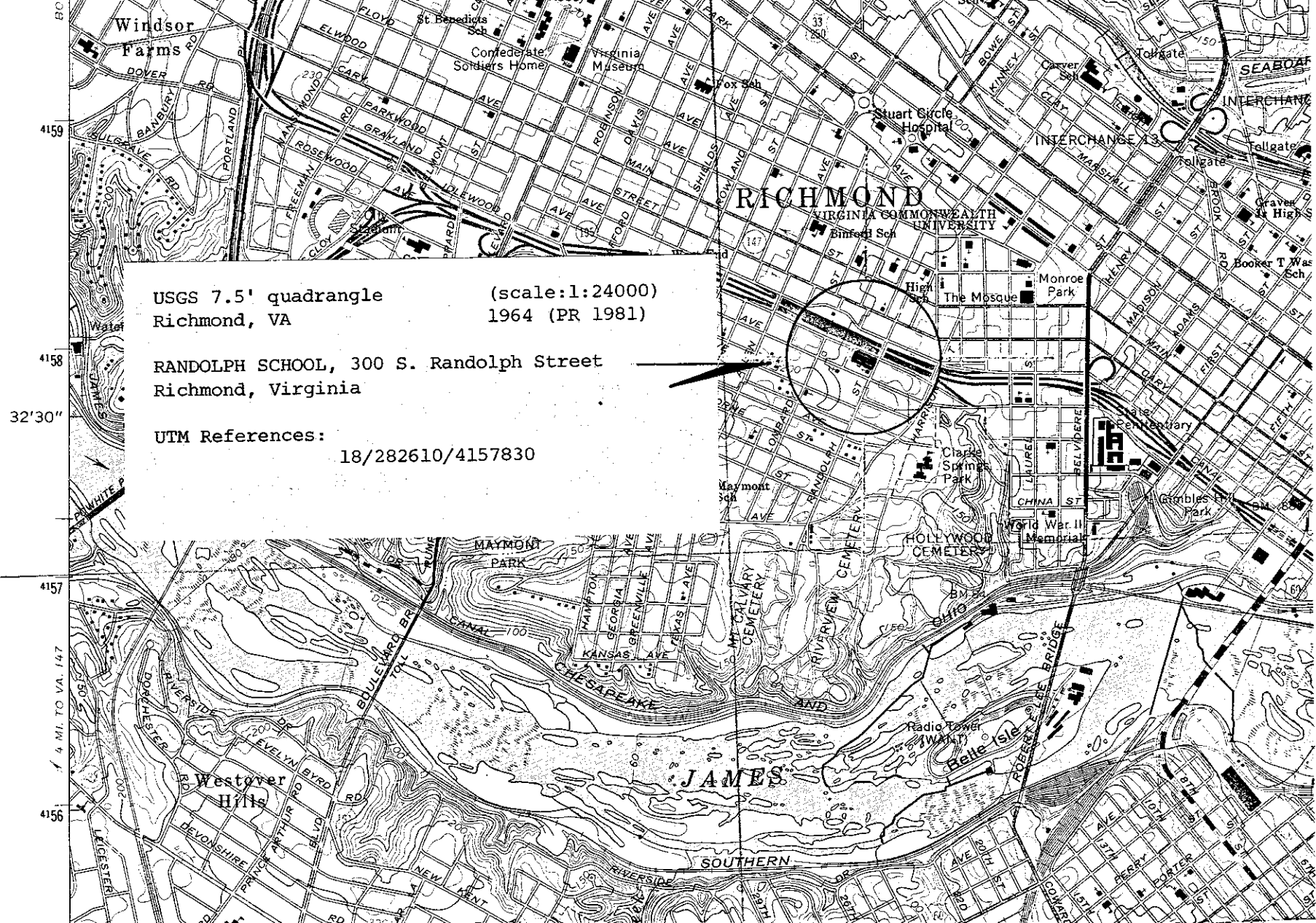
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Richmond, VA

(scale:1:24000)
1964 (PR 1981)

RANDOLPH SCHOOL, 300 S. Randolph Street
Richmond, Virginia

UTM References:

18/282610/4157830